



Qualifications and
Curriculum Authority



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Rewarding Learning

GCE AS and A level subject criteria for physical education

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A and AS level criteria set out the knowledge, understanding and skills and assessment objectives common to all A and AS specifications in a given subject. They provide the framework within which the awarding body creates the detail of the specification.

Subject criteria are intended to:

- help ensure consistent and comparable standards in the same subject across the awarding bodies
- define the relationship between the A and AS specifications, with the AS as a subset of the A level
- ensure that the rigour of A level is maintained
- help higher education institutions and employers, including organisations that rely on volunteers, know what has been studied and assessed.

Any specification that contains significant elements of the subject physical education must be consistent with the relevant parts of these subject criteria.

2. Aims

- 2.1 AS and A level specifications in PE should encourage students to become increasingly **physically competent** by:

- developing the skills and techniques they require to perform effectively in physical activities
- applying and adapting a wide range of skills and techniques effectively in different types of physical activity
- developing and applying their skills in different roles, such as performer, leader and official within physical activities
- applying their skills in different contexts within a physical activity.

- 2.2 AS and A level specifications in PE should **enable students to maintain and develop their involvement and effectiveness in physical activity** through:

- developing their knowledge and understanding of factors that enable them and others to be physically active:
 - as part of a balanced lifestyle
 - as part of a lifelong involvement in an active and healthy lifestyle

- developing their knowledge and understanding of the relationship between skill, strategy/composition, and body and mind readiness in ensuring effective and efficient performance in their own and others' roles such as performer, leader and official.

2.3 AS and A level specifications in PE should enable students to be **informed and discerning decision makers who understand how to be involved in physical activity** through helping them to:

- understand how they and others make the most of the opportunities and pathways available to be involved in physical activity
- understand and critically evaluate how contemporary products and consumer-focused influences related to physical activity affect and inform young people's decisions about being involved in a range of physical activities
- understand and critically evaluate current key influences that might limit or encourage young people's involvement in physical activity.

3. Subject content

3.1 AS and A level specifications in physical education should build on the skills, knowledge and understanding set out in the national curriculum documents for England, Northern Ireland and Wales at key stage 4, and accommodate those students who have followed GCSE physical education.

3.2 AS specifications should be concerned with developing students' physical competence:

- in different contexts within a physical activity
- in roles such as performer, leader and official

by:

- developing the skills and techniques required to perform effectively in specific activities
- enabling students to apply and adapt these skills and techniques effectively across different types of activity
- developing students' knowledge and understanding of roles such as performer, leader and official
- helping students to develop their knowledge and understanding about what constitutes effective performance in these different roles

- developing the depth of students' ability to analyse the effectiveness of the components of performance and their influence on the overall quality of the performance in roles such as performer, leader and official
- developing the students' skills of analysis and evaluation to identify key priorities for improving performance
- prioritising a range of solutions and using these effectively to improve both the components and the performance as a whole.

A level specifications should be concerned with further developing and refining students' competence in physical activity as a performer or a leader or an official by:

- developing deeper knowledge and understanding of the relationships between the components of performance in their chosen role
- developing their ability to analyse performance critically, identifying key factors that affect its quality, effectiveness and efficiency
- developing their ability to make critical changes and adaptations to performance to improve its quality, effectiveness and efficiency.

3.3 AS and A level specifications should be concerned with enabling students to maintain and develop their involvement and effectiveness in lifelong physical activity as part of a balanced lifestyle, by:

- helping them to identify and understand the various factors and influences that impact on them and others being and remaining involved in physical activity
- planning ways for them and others to be active and achieve a work–life balance amid conflicting pressures and demands
- understanding what constitutes a balanced, active lifestyle
- identifying the ways in which a lifelong involvement in physical activity can be achieved.

A level specifications should be further concerned with helping students to become increasingly discerning about why and how they and others choose to get involved in physical activity, by:

- identifying the range of opportunities available to them in school, college, club, local communities, regionally or nationally for developing their interests and expertise in different activities
- following their interests in roles such as performer, leader or official through their chosen activities for the purpose of recreation, elite performance, further study, volunteering or career opportunities.

- 3.4 A level specifications should be further concerned with helping students to become informed and discerning decision makers about being involved in physical activity. They should ensure students develop the skills and methods with which to evaluate critically contemporary key influences that have a significant impact on young people's participation in physical activity. They should further develop a:
- deeper knowledge and understanding of the effects of involvement in physical activity on young people's wellbeing, health and fitness
 - critical understanding of how to make the most of influences, opportunities and products to increase young people's participation in healthy physical activity
 - critical understanding of how to make young people more likely to make a lifelong commitment to being involved in physical activity.

4. Key skills

- 4.1 AS and A level specifications in physical education should provide opportunities for developing and generating evidence for assessing relevant key skills from the list below. Where appropriate these opportunities should be directly cross-referenced, at specified level(s), to the key skills standards, which may be found on the QCA website (www.qca.org.uk).
- Application of number
 - Communication
 - Improving own learning and performance
 - Information and communication technology
 - Problem solving
 - Working with others

5. Assessment objectives

5.1 Knowledge, understanding and skills are closely linked. Specifications should require that students demonstrate the following assessment objectives in the context of the content and skills prescribed at AS and A level.

AO1 Candidates should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical activity.

AO2 Candidates should demonstrate the ability to apply skills, knowledge and understanding in physical activity.

AO3 Candidates should demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate critically physical activity.

The following weightings reflect the importance of physical education as learning both in and through physical activity.

	AS	A2	A level
AO1	35–45%	25–35%	30–40%
AO2	40–50%	30–40%	35–45%
AO3	10–20%	30–40%	20–30%

6. Scheme of assessment

Internal assessment

6.1 All AS and A level specifications in physical education must have internal assessment with a weighting of between 30 and 50 per cent. Internal assessment should not constitute more than 50% of A2.

6.2 Where internal assessment is included, specifications must make clear how reliability and fairness are secured, by setting out requirements that ensure the robustness of each stage of the internal assessment, ie:

- the specific skills to be assessed
- setting of tasks
- extent of supervision in carrying out of tasks
- conditions under which assessment takes place

- marking of the assessment and internal standardising procedures
- any moderation process.

Synoptic assessment

6.3 All specifications should include synoptic assessment. The synoptic assessment will be set in A2 units.

Synoptic assessment in physical education requires candidates to draw together the three aims of the subject criteria.

Quality of written communication

6.4 AS and A level specifications will be required to assess the candidates' quality of written communication in accordance with the guidance document produced by QCA.